

Notes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council's Planning Working Group held at the Council Chambers on Tuesday 30th May 2023.

Present: Cllrs L Ashley, J Carney, A Gowler, A Hay, A Keating and M Siggee.

P1 23/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Charrier and S Unwin.

P2 23/24 Election of Chairman of Group and Vice-Chairman

Cllr Hay nominated Cllr Ashley as Chairman of the Group, seconded by Cllr Gowler and agreed by all. Cllr Ashley nominated Cllr Gowler as Vice-Chairman, seconded by Cllr Hay and agreed by all.

P3 23/24 Appeals, Decisions and Withdrawn Plans

Cllr Gowler had agreed to speak on the Council's behalf in support of application F/YR23/0033/F (extension to existing building and change of use of land to light industrial use at Farm Park, Short Nightlayers Drove), which was to be considered by FDC's planning committee the following day with an officer's recommendation to refuse. Cllr Gowler was unable to attend the meeting but said he would be submitting comments to be read out. He said he would point out the Town Council was in favour of economic development and creating job opportunities, hence the need to support the application which was an extension of an existing unit. He would also point out there were no objections from other statutory consultees, including Highways. A sewage farm and the South Fens Business Centre, along with other industrial units, were already located in the vicinity so there was already an established use as an industrial area.

The Clerk updated members on the latest planning decisions from Fenland District Council. The following had all been granted planning permission:

Erect a dwelling on land west of 55 Huntingdon Road;

Works to an Oak tree covered by a TPO at 1 The Elms;

Internal works to a listed building, to replace loft insulation, and to insulate roof and walls of store building at 2 Park Street;

Supplementary agreement for the inclusion of 4 first homes at the Womb Farm development;

Erect a dwelling at land north west of 30 Curf Terrace;

Change of use of existing museum/offices to ground floor offices and 2 dwellings at first floor level at 14 Church Lane;

Two applications had been refused permission (both had been recommended for refusal by the Town Council):

Erect storage racking (retrospective) at 3-5 Prospect Way;

Erect a dwelling at land east of 54 Queensway.

The application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for change of use of first floor flat to additional clinic room at 24B West Park Street did not require permission;
An application to fell 3 Field Maple, 1 Walnut and a group of Ash and Elder trees within a Conservation Area at 114 High Street was “dormant”.

P5 23/24 Applications & Revised Applications

- a) F/YR23/0446/F - Change of use of commercial building to 1 x dwelling (2-storey, 3-bed) and erect single-storey extension to front at Coach House Hub, 12 Station Road - *Support*
- b) F/YR23/0451/VOC - Variation of condition 05 (first occupation – parking) relating to planning permission F/YR21/0060/F (erect a single-storey, 3-bed dwelling with detached garage) at 27 Linden Drive - *Support*
- c) F/YR23/0454/F - Erect a 2-storey detached garage/storage building with office/gym above to existing dwelling involving demolition of existing detached garage at Braeburn House, 12 London Road - *Support*
- d) F/YR23/0459/TRCA - Fell 4 Conifer trees within a Conservation Area at 9 South Park Street – *Support*
- e) F/YR23/0474/TRCA - Works to 1 Sycamore tree, 1 Holly tree and 1 Ash tree within a Conservation Area at 14 Park Street - *Support*
- f) F/YR23/0476/F - Erect 1 dwelling (single storey, 2-bed) including the formation of an access at land south of The Grange, London Road, accessed from Stocking Drove – *Support*

P6 23/24 Any Other Business

The Clerk had received a copy of Section 106 payments held by Fenland District Council, the planning application they referred to and a description about how the money should be spent. In total over £1m was held for the Fenland villages, over £220,000 for Wisbech, £210,000 for Whittlesey, £73,000 for March and just £5,734 for Chatteris.

Cllr Carney queried if this sum, set aside for open space and community benefit, could be spent on furnishing the new community rooms being created by the Council as part of the museum and community room project. He argued there was sufficient play equipment in the town and the money would go to community resources.

The Clerk said of major concern was the fact that so little had been received in Section 106 payments, in fact nothing in recent years, whereas in the past there had been substantial payments which had been spent on benefitting the town, after consultation with the Town Council.

Cllr Ashley pointed out there should have been payments, other than to education and a bus stop, from the Womb Farm development and she asked when the Tithe barn site was built if there would be payments from that major development.

Cllr Gowler said the argument was that land prices were artificially high compared to house prices so the developers could not make 17.5% profit on the houses if they paid over Section 106 payments. Hence the need to allocate more land for development.

Cllr Hay suggested the Council should be able to go back to developers if it was proven that more than 17.5% profit had been realised.

Cllr Ashley said Fenland should be pushing for Section 106 payments for developments in Chatteris where house prices were not far behind villages in Huntingdonshire and East Cambs (such as Somersham and Sutton) where they were claiming substantial Section 106 and CIL payouts from developers. Cllr Gowler pointed out Chatteris was a commuter town for Cambridge.

It was agreed to write to the portfolio for planning at Fenland District Council, Cllr Dee Laws, arguing that there had been insufficient push to obtain Section 106 payments from developers in Chatteris and calling on FDC to rectify the situation, particularly in view of house prices in the town.